IMPOSTOR: A Poetry Journal

Volume 2, Issue 1

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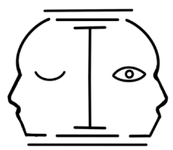
February 2022



Impostor: A Poetry Journal
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Impostor syndrome: the belief that talents and accomplishments are fraudulent or the result of luck.

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From the Editors

Dear Reader,

Time flies, and this issue's release comes on the cusp of *Impostor*'s one-year anniversary. On February 1, 2021, we put ourselves out there and opened up submissions for the very first time. And today, on February 15, 2022, we've released Volume 2, Issue 1—our fifth issue to date.

Coincidentally, many of the poems in this issue deal with the passing of time: coming of age, self-love, faith, and disillusionment. We hope you find as much power in this collection as we did.

It's an honor to have published so many incredible poets and to be a growing platform in the world of indie lit mags. And it's a dream come true to edit and oversee *Impostor*—though we still struggle with impostor syndrome ourselves.

We wholeheartedly thank our contributors and you, reader, for believing in us and what we are trying to create.

Always yours,
L.M. Camiolo and Coral O'Leary

Our Mission

Perhaps you've experienced it yourself—we certainly have! The literary world is rife with lofty and exclusionary definitions of what qualifies the title of "poet." When we decided to create this journal, we knew that first and foremost, we wanted to create a welcoming and encouraging space for writers who may feel intimidated by the established literary world or who feel as if their credentials—or lack thereof—don't fall in line with what's expected. We want your submissions regardless of your history; age, academic background, or the length of your curriculum vitae hold no influence on our view of what constitutes a poet. Your voice matters—we want to hear it!

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The End of the Year Approaches and I Wonder if I Should Make Resolutions

COURTNEY LEBLANC

lose weight / learn
another language / stop
picking my cuticles
I've been trying to lose
the same ten pounds for ten
years, have no belief
international travel will be
possible in the next twelve
months, and have picked
my nails for a lifetime. Perhaps
it's better to focus on realistic
goals:
get outside / take
time to quiet my
mind / put pen to
paper
I wonder if the year will start
with a lockdown, if people will
keep wearing masks, if we'll
even survive another year.

Laureate

JANNAH YUSUF AL-JAMIL

Sometimes I wonder if I'll ever wake up. Just open my eyes
and find myself away from this life. Laying in a grass field with
the sky in a different color above me or laying in a bed with
sheets I don't recognize with my soul tucked into
a better body or laying in your arms finally or
laying six feet under the ground with dirt in my lungs and
a smile on my lips because it turned out that the nursery rhyme
was right -- at least one of them, surely. That one about
boats and lives being dreams. Muslims aren't supposed to
have ostentatious gravestones, but I want a marble memorial. I want
laurels and I want a Wikipedia article and I want
to wake up and find myself in the sky and find myself
to be the earth herself, rumbling and restless.

Enchiladas

DANIELLE ESPINOSA

I want to leave breadcrumb trails,
proof that I existed, that I
mattered. If only just to show
that I was not useless, collect
my evidence like shiny pieces
in a magpie's talons. When I had
read everything you'd ever
written, I noted your frequent mentions
of pasta. You laughed, said *I will be*
more mindful now, I do
love pasta. Later, you declined my
invitation to coffee and, devastated,
I thought, *Well that's the end*
of that. In your next published
story, a character pulls
enchiladas from the oven; I thought, *Well*
that could have easily been a
lasagna. I'd like to think you got as
far as typing *l-a-s* before
pausing, hitting backspace-backspace-
backspace, replacing with *e-n-c-*
h-i-l- a-d-a-s, then
reclining back in your creaky chair,
mindful. It's a small thought. But,
it is enough.

Artifacts

MELODY SERRA

Treasure trove
A box underneath his bed
I wonder, when was the last time his hands were upon it
What was the last thing he put inside it

A deep breath, a sigh, and then I open it
Discovery—a collage of artifacts, clues about the past

Scientists have found fossils in Argentina
They show that dinosaurs socialized,
Traveled together, died together

I am clutching this past, this yesterday
Photographs of time gone
Lockets of hair, poems, letters, lyrics
Old passports, stamped proof of all the places you've seen
Paperwork stating the date you came to America

I can't put it down, I am reading and re-reading
A letter where you talk about the last time at the plaza
The way your friends and family bid you and your beloved farewell
Kisses on the cheek
Hugs that seemed to say "I hope we meet again in another life"
There you looked around and you saw your community
Your family
Patterns you've come to memorize and love

Treasure trove
Discovery—a collage of artifacts, clues about the past
Did they all indeed meet again, in another life?

In Which We Find

TAYLOR GREENE

the scent of old theses on a laboratory shelf,
iodine so strong you can smell it
across the room as some poor thing is
stripped clean to be studied.

death has a funny way of teaching us,
dog paws seem to articulate
as hands do when they don't have any flesh
to stop them.

my tray full of belongings,
a knife an awl a fishing hook a bottle a bead
crafted to perfection
how many hundreds of years ago?

a stone knife can be sharp enough to cut,
and a single red bead runs down
my thumb. has it tasted
this before?

To Be a Gannet on Skellig Michael

CANDICE KELSEY

I would appear pointed on both ends
With my spear-like bill and spiky tail
Rather than a rounding and pear-shaped [_____]
Who shouldn't have [_____].

disappointment called Daughter
let herself go like that

I could plunge spectacularly into the sea
Headfirst from one hundred feet above
Rather than wait until midnight [_____]
When the [_____] are finally resting.

to raid the cupboards
watchful eyes of judgment

I should only swallow mother's regurgitations
For a tolerable 80 or 90 days
Rather than every [_____]
Until I succumb to [_____].

damn day of my life
total vulnerability status

Not All My Ghosts

MARIA GIESBRECHT

wear white and come in
through the windows
some wear dress pants and
crawl in through the front door,
wiping their whiskey breath
on the welcome mat

not all my ghosts overstay their
welcome
some leave in the middle of the
night without saying goodbye

not all my ghosts call me their
daughter
but most do

Nightwalker

ANNA SHIRSHOVA

Above the
tree crowns
towers
the Nightwalker.

Moon rays
map the forest

through
His arcs,
Luna's gaze

inking
His skin
peppered indigo.

Woodland Guardian,
He patrols until
first coloration

of the skies—
from the Sun
He hides

inside a
deer.

She's looking for a vase

CONNIE MAUNDER

there you are, my love
(enter) bouquet, red string,
a smile, soft touch (a
side—i'm thinking
of you). the flowers
have nothing on you (sfx. two
kisses at the end, xx)
(exit) i love you
unheard, written down
(implied)

IN SEVENTH GRADE [WE] INSTALL SOFTWARE

GRIPP

to control [our] computers remotely
during study hall, [we] haunt a classmate
from across the room, typing messages
he cannot explain, phantom keystrokes
until he cries *ghost!* and the principal
comes by to examine the machine

she attends the screen, looking for a culprit
forensics in a digital world she barely knows
the class watches her and i watch with them
[we] are afraid. but she shrugs and leaves
day over, the humans follow. the story lapses
for them into mythos, for [us] into identity

the first time i felt my pulse

ANGIE SHENOUDA

i was in sixth grade
in PE
(which i hated)
after running
a lap
on weeping
gym floor
breathless
hair salty
above
my eyebrows
Ms. Weisner
taught us to count
our heartbeats
two fingers
on your wrist
count the beating
for fifteen seconds
multiply by four
that's
your heart rate
i didn't care
about my
heart rate
i still don't care
and i still hate
running
it's easy to forget
my pulse exists
until
i feel
the beating
on my forehead
neck
when i think
i'm going to die
from the eyes
on me
as i open
my mouth
i feel it
in my chest
when i see
numbers
rising faster
than i can
count
instagram
strapless dresses shiny plates
sharp knives
fuzzy lights
group hugs candid laughing and
smiling and
laughing
and coughing coughing
the beating
is violence
every second
blood shed
air has
been stolen
from me.

Strawberry Ice Cream

SARAI MARIE SUMI

I'm broken inside.
By my own insecure hands.
Starved, Recovered, Starved.
Warm meals under orange candles.
IV tubes under LEDs.
Biting, chewing, thinking, dying.
Save for strawberry ice cream.
My childhood favorite.
The cartons my father would bring me after work.
The love associated with the pink, with my dad.
Now he watches as I wilt away.
Complicated relationship with the fuel that keeps me alive.
Save for strawberry ice cream.
Pink, pretty, safe.
My insecurities are all unveiled in what makes you human.

Convalescing, I discover the skin.

LORELEI BACHT

Among the *get well soon*, the *sorry to*
hear that, take care, I discover: a single

bar of soap – essential oil of satsuma,
cold pressed and glorious. *Self-care*,

the doctor said. *Self-care*, said the girl
friends. *Self-care*, the message on my

phone. We begin small: a shower is
quotidian enough for my heroism – lack

of. I peel off layers of leggings – uncover
dry-flaking, and mishandled. I remember

in my twenties, Parisian and single:
scented candles, Body Shop scrubs, all

oranges and cinnamon, sea salt. Whose
fault? When did we surrender? Two kids

and the husband's affair – I could not
bear to see or touch: the sag, the ragdoll

love handles; and the landscape: all
purple isolines. How do we love? How

to relearn to see and touch, now past
whatever peaking means? Not peach,

not silk, not sugar-spice, not at all nice,
just skin. I do not hold a clear definition.

I look up medical, breathing, psoriasis,
but that's not it. What is a skin? Water,

protein, fat and minerals; all layers,
structures and functions; redness, pallor,

sweating, itching; bare skin, bear skin,
Rumpelstiltskin – I admit it: I have no

clue where to begin to love this skin.

Friends with Boys

NICOLE LALIBERTY

Ryan's going on about
Supermarket Sweep—

the bags of diapers,
the enormous racks of ribs

he is strong enough to carry
to the checkout line.

I think about us in the
grocery store, him

carrying me instead of
30 pounds of pork, and then

I remember that love
is not the goal of

Supermarket Sweep.
If I ran my hand over his

hair like a shopping cart,
we would lose.

The host would disqualify us
for rolling on the linoleum

of the soda aisle and forgetting
to play the game.

I DON'T WANT TO LIFT WEIGHTS WITH HIM

GRIPP

burning, hyperconscious of my body
and uncoordinated to boot. *no thanks*

you never know. what if you get into a fight?
i dont get into fights. i say so. our father nods
what if someone hits on your girl at the bar?
this makes our father reconsider

i dont have a girl. i dont go to bars
part of me would be lost in a fight
part of me would be lost in preparing

My grandmother is trying on party gowns for my cousin's wedding

NICOLE LALIBERTY

and my mother is there, helping her into sleeves—
arms raised, like sunflower stalks, as tulle and

beading sink to her feet. "I look like Mama
Maroni." Who is Mama Maroni, and why

does she dress every day like she is in
a mermaid parade? we ask, laugh.

She gazes into the blooming
fabric chest, examines the gap.

"What am I supposed to put in here?" She dips
a hand in, and I expect a bouquet

of peonies, lasagna, an aging love note when
it emerges.

Instead, she raises her arms
toward my mother and demands another dress

to get lost in. We spend hours wrapping her
in fabric and arms, watching her face emerge from

gauze and purples, until we are all orbiting each other,
growing high, high up from the earth.

Confessionals

CLEMENTINE WILLIAMS

I sit in church, small legs stuck together
from the sweat of stockings and
lack of air conditioning that
makeshift fans cannot fix.
My grandmother digs through her purse,
desperate for a loose peppermint
that will stop all my complainin'
about the heat of a holy spirit
I could not feel and
of sermons I did not understand.
I let the peppermint tease my loose teeth
and simmer against my tongue while
I make sense of the crystallized portraits
of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.
Somewhere, the geometric windows
create a bigger picture of God,
but I am too small—too pubescent
to look such a man in the eyes.

Recipe for a Non-Functioning Adult

KATE CAREY

This makes a mess to be cleaned up in therapy later.

Ingredients:
1 oldest child of 4
8 tablespoons of Passive Aggressive communication
2 cups of hoarding
25 oz. of things we're not supposed to talk about
1 bag of glass shards
3 cups of stubborn attitude
Ice

1) Mix together all ingredients except the glass into one bowl until it gets to a consistency where you no longer can figure out its contents. You'll want it to look lumpy and distorted. Will it become a solid piece of glistening meat or a sad flapjack of despair? Who knows? Just keep stirring. As long as it's in motion, everything is fine.

2) On a cookie sheet, spread out the bed of glass shards—you know the ones, the ones you have to tiptoe over, risking harm to your own feet before saying "Hey, why are we walking on all this sharp shit? Shouldn't we deal with it instead?"

3) Pour your congealing mixture over the layer of glass. Spread unevenly and thick across the sheet. You wanna make sure the mixture is poured so that the glass cannot be seen. This will make for a crunchy surprise in every bite.

4) When the oven has begun to visibly melt into the floor take out of heat and put into pressure cooker.

5) The thing about this version of adulthood is it never feels like it has reached adult enough. Keep mixture inside pressure cooker until it's about to implode and the smell of sulfur hits your nose.

6) Serve with ice.

Skip Intro

CANDICE KELSEY

There are people who have *Die Hard* memorized / from the airplane scene to "Let it Snow" / no one knows the opening or ending credits of a film by heart / no cast bios / patrons / sustaining members / crew / choreographer / nor accompanist in the playbills / of *Jagged Little Pill* or *The Inheritance* / story is an emerald tree boa birthing four to eight live baby snakes from a branch in the Amazon low country / character and plot are arboreal / life the bark and language the leaves / art is a slithering fecundity / I think / of Susan Sontag's *I, etcetera* declaration of exhaustion / her consequent desire "to be a mountain, a tree, a stone" / to rest / shattering all the intros like ovoviviparous membranes / and skip / barefoot / across / glass.

America's Pandemic before Starting HRT

after lawrence ferlinghetti

OLIVER ANTONI KRAWCZYK

America is a beautiful place
to be born into
especially if you love boy bands
& heartthrobs—
the edwards & bellas
horrifically bound together, married. With children
that live and breathe. Come out
of the closet when you're ready.

America is
a beautiful place to be born into
especially if you take to the hobby of
disinfecting blood
from your walls, streets,
your past, digested food, history, poetry.
If you enjoy *passing*—
homeless folks outside
empty apartments
(how else could we
presume luxury if not for its space wasted?)
If you know you will
never *pass*. You don't need to, don't want to.
But this cope interlaced to your body.

America is a beautiful
place to be born into
especially if you love donating
to stop these terrors that flood our lives
that continue to have no end
in sight, the homeless

make you keep going to work, to fill
our prisons. To create the cheap
furniture that fills
your empty luxury apartments, empty
calories at brunch and landlords get fat. Full coffins and a sky
full of ash from those that have died
preventable deaths. A mask
was never an excuse but you allowed this
whether you complained about it or not
you allowed your hairdresser to fearmonger
about the vaccine. You allowed unionbusting
and cheered on daddy bezos,
you started a twitch channel and you
watched elon on snl and chuckled and you
tried to make an nft, you killed a few trees, you
wrote a teen romantic comedy with heart

throbbing. I hold
my heart out to you, it drips and I hope you will lick.
I hope you will celebrate with cheesecake
when I die. Know that I simp for the sun and that when it shines
on you, it's really me in my full formless state. I did not
ask to be. But I was born. Now, in 2021 on mothers day, I asked
my grandfather if I could retire. At first he said he didn't care, except
you only just began working, missy.

America
is a place to hold a passport, to fly
across an ocean or border, to flee to, to flee from
to unionize, to gluttonously enjoy, to die in.
~~Is not a place at all.~~

When
I die, you will read these stupid poems
I took the time to write. This is my work.

Where I've Been

DORIANA DIAZ

i come to you/from the lynching years
i come to you/from the Cafe society, 1939
soaked with/guttural vibrations
blood on the leaves and blood at the root
eyes closed/evoking prayer/fruit here/grows strange
there would be no encore

i come you from the extremities of/my mamas cervix/flesh knots
unable to trace the lineage/where's your mama/she buried in the
cemeteries with all the other kinfolk/resting against ancestors
praying not to be dug up/swollen limbs/and dirt covered skulls

i come to you tonite/from the raids/you cut loose on me
i watched as you licked my blood off your Nikes
i watched as my/home burned/no barrier/but skin/and soft tissue
a hail mary/the last judgment/all wasted on/your name

i come to you/from the way God made me/a peculiar mess
self conscious blood/harvesting inside a self-righteous woman
only knowing love through the lens of neglect
only knowing love/when it leaves/early on a Sunday morning
just a woman tripping over her own eyelids/just a woman sowing up her wounds
with metal wire

i come to you/from a cloudy wednesday/and a sour friday
when we both took/a pill/and thrashed around/in our childhood bodies
skipping/towards where the honeysuckles bloomed
and we knew our age only/from where the light touched us

i come to you/this morning/from the gap between Vivien's teeth
memorializing her laughter/i fix my body under the guttural explosions
hoping to rest there for awhile/waiting as all traces of/hope have been wiped away
one day she'll become a woman of her own/have her own children/or not/and i'll still
yearn

i come to you/from the the west side/philly/west kensington/osage avenue/69th st
the smell of nigga on my tongue/aint that it/busy smoking/those youngbloods
where they running to/the hustlers/turned/murders/the cowboys
wind tangled with the dust of all the dead/homies/held in kin
each with faces screwed up with the first and cleanest love

Notes from the war:

WREN BEE

They were the days beyond hope. Once sparkling cities turned dark when power collapsed in the freak, but expected, ice storms. Food spoiled in homes from lack of refrigeration, as children and elders froze in their beds. Meanwhile, minimum wage-slaves poured bleach over good groceries, abandoned and unsold in no-longer-fluorescent-filled mega-marts, because a hungry dog is an obedient dog.

Out west, the sky turned red, opaque and smoke-filled, as the roaring insatiable infernos devoured communities whole, devoured whole ecosystems. The bees, all dead. The trees, all dead. The people, not dead yet, but never again to harvest that honey from the bees that feed on the sap of the trees. All for what?

The summer of hell and high water, the flicker of righteous fury in the streets drowned out by the bullshit piled high enough to choke us, overflowing the failed systems of the city on the hill. While we argued over slogans and semantics, a rose by any other name smells just as foul.

And the dead lay where they fell, struck down by incompetent hubris of devotees of the only god for times like these. Wavelengths collapsed. Circumstances narrowed into an 850 sq/ft box of reality with a struggling garden for the lucky ones. Some baked. Some died. We all slipped into the surreal. Where were you when our tightrope snapped?

When did you realize the war had already started? That you had already chosen a side? One day it was clear that betrayal was the highest truth. All honor to the traitors. One day it became clear we were fighting for our own destruction. The monsters were heroes, but are heroes real?

Remember when they sold you hope? Remember when you thought they could be trusted? Our children won't live to see the end of where their lies took us. Not that it's safe to have children. A sneering cynicism the greatest potential allowed in the face of nihilistic catastrophe. The elders have given up hope. The children never learned it.

Starve

SWAGATIKA SARANGI

Chop off the crown. Strip the skin. I am in the kitchen with a knife suitable for onions and tomatoes. I use it for this pineapple. Brown blotches stand out on its yellow skin. A polka-dot sunflower. The eyes are inedible, advisable to pluck them before consumption. I like to pick them out while eating.

A decade ago, in science class, they taught us that enzymes build and break things in our bodies. Pineapples carry bromelain enzymes. I slice them into circles. They look like a pressed sunflower now. A big bite and the walls of my mouth itch. It's those bromelain enzymes at work. When you eat a pineapple, it eats you back. I want to ask the enzymes, "are you building me up or breaking me down?" I let them be. Grill or bake them and they don't sting as much. I eat pineapple on pizza and drink piña colada. I'm right. It's better this way. An acquired taste. Not meant for everyone. I'm convinced that loving someone is like eating a pineapple. To endure its occasional prickles only to relish the sweetness.

Today, I brought this pineapple home to bake a cake. There are always leftover ingredients from previous cooking experiments. In the refrigerator, there is a Tupperware with a yellow post-it note, "make a meal of this." I open to find grief disguised as yeast. Ready to rise.

my back ain't no crystal stair

after Langston Hughes

EDYTHE RODRIGUEZ

but the world
climbs anyway,
teeters at the
top, determined
not to fall.

but here I
am bent,
determined
not to buckle.
knees cracked,
spine splinter
ing.

SEVEN / SAB'A

JANNAH YUSUF AL-JAMIL

I think that the most beautiful thing is learning to sing
in a house of worship. The glory of organs, of choirs; of second-graders
in the local masjid singing a song that's been around for a thousand years:
Ji'ta sharafta-al Madinah / Marhaban ya khayra da'. *Marhabah*,
we sang, pitchy and wrong and beautiful.
Marhabah. I don't sing into the curvature of the dome anymore, but there's Yusuf Islam
on the radio, sometimes; *ooh, baby, baby, it's a wild world*, Ma exclaims, before
nudging us, whispering, *he became Muslim, you know*, and we know, Ma, and your
singing is awful, Ma, but keep going. It's hard to get by. When the Prophet
arrived at his city, he was greeted with song and he built a masjid. Marhabah. I think
there's a reason why song sticks in your head more than just regular words. I think
the world is beautiful and so is song. Yusuf Islam first heard of the deen when he heard
the adhan described as music for God. Marhabah. You can be jealous of God,
with the whole world before him, or you can be sorry that God cannot experience it himself --
there's the shade of his tree in heaven for later, but in the dunya, I'll take
the maple trees behind my masjid and cry out *marhabah!* to the angels and to everyone.
There are seven entrances to hell and eight to heaven but the earth is where we all start,
and it is a turbulent marble, tumbling through the vast expanse of space.
It's a wild world, and it's for us. It's a wild world, and it's in our hands. It's
a wild world, and I wish I could welcome every soul to it
because it is horrible and hedonic and holy and home so
marhabah, marhabah, marhabah.

Contributors

Jannah Yusuf Al-Jamil is a Muslim-American writer who is learning how to do many things, such as how to cook shrimp and how to love. They read for *antinarrative* (@antinarrativeZ). Find their work in *Overheard*, *Pollux Journal*, and at jannahyusufaljamil.carrd.co.

Lorelei Bacht (she/they) successfully escaped grey skies and red buses to live and write somewhere in the monsoon forest. They wish they could say that they have been working on a chapbook, but they have been drinking green tea and listening to frogs instead. They can be found on Instagram @lorelei.bacht.writer and on Twitter @bachtlorelei.

Wren Bee is a queer bird. They are most at home outside in the garden, by the water, or under the trees. They are passionate about building community with their human and non-human neighbors based on mutual care and mutual aid. They are fascinated by both the connections and the spaces between people, which leads them to a wide variety of creative expression—embroidery and spinning, painting and drawing, singing and songwriting, poems and stories—in an attempt to see more clearly.

Kate Carey (she/her) is a fat queer polyamorous slut who sometimes spends whole days in bed crying because feelings are hard. Through deeply personal poetry and creative nonfiction, she touches on issues relating to trauma, fat liberation, mental illness and sexuality. You can find more about her at https://www.katemcarey.com/.

Doriana Diaz is a storyteller, shapeshifter, and sensitive spirit rooted in Philadelphia's soulful rhythms. Doriana is the self-published author of *Mami Calls Me Gabriella* and *Sunphases*, both released in 2018. Her words have appeared in platforms such as: *Nappy Head Club*, *Black Women Radicals*, *GROW/N Mag*, *Saddie Baddies*, *SYLA Studio*, *Black Girl Magik*, *We Heal Too*, *The Kraal*, and many more! She believes words have DNA, they sit under our skin, erupting into soft and vivid explosions through our veins like lighting. Her writing is an exploration of cultural agency, archival documentation, and rhythms of resistance and expansion.

Danielle Espinosa is a queer, Filipina therapist living in Los Angeles. She holds an MS in Counseling from California State University, Fullerton. Danielle moonlights as a poet and writer, exploring themes such as attachment, trauma, and being a child of immigrants. She can be found on Instagram and Twitter at @daniellетherapy.

Maria Giesbrecht is a Canadian poet with a unique storytelling style. She is an accountant by day and loves to travel and write about her experiences around the world. Maria is passionate about using storytelling and poetry as a means of self-reflection and healing.

Taylor Greene (he/him) is an archaeologist living in Arkansas, so he spends more time reading in an office than you'd think. When he's not there, he likes taking long drives to see archaeological sites and find good BBQ places. His favorite tree is the magnolia in bloom, and his favorite coffee shop was the original Common Grounds in Lexington, Kentucky—although it's gone now and their drip coffee was never very good.

gripp is a writer / programmer / performer based primarily on the internet. Eeir work is multimedia and interdisciplinary, ranging from written word to performance art to electronic installation. Ee have appeared onstage as an actor and a poet, self-published and been printed in literary magazines, built digital chapbooks and chatbots, taught college courses and workshops, and have written, produced, and appeared in short films. Much of gripp's work is fantastical, surreal, and absurdist. It confronts race, gender, mental imbalance, loneliness, existential dread, and life as a cyborg. In eeir spare time, ee enjoy board games, avoiding attention, and writing biographies in the third person.

Candice Kelsey teaches writing in the South. Her poetry appears in *Poets Reading the News* and *Poet Lore* among other journals, and her first collection, *Still I am Pushing*, explores mother-daughter relationships as well as toxic body messages. She won the Two Sisters Writing Contest for her micro story, was chosen as a finalist in Cutthroat's Joy Harjo Poetry Prize, and was recently nominated for both a Best of the Net and two Pushcarts. Find her at www.candicemkelseypoet.com

Oliver Antoni Krawczyk is a trans poet who wiggles steamed milky foam for a living. They have been published in *table//feast*, *west review*, and elsewhere.

Nicole LaLiberty is a writer and cartoonist living in Stratford, Connecticut.

Courtney LeBlanc is the author of the full length collections *Exquisite Bloody, Beating Heart* (Riot in Your Throat) and *Beautiful & Full of Monsters* (Vegetarian Alcoholic Press). She is also the founder and editor-in-chief of *Riot in Your Throat*, an independent poetry press. She loves nail polish, tattoos, and a soy latte each morning. Read her publications on her blog: www.wordperv.com. Follow her on twitter: @wordperv, and IG: @wordperv79.

Connie Maunder lives and works in North Yorkshire, England, and is a postgraduate student at the University of York. She is studying for a Creative Writing PGDip and enjoys all forms of creative writing. Her poetry can be found @mx_over on Instagram.

Edythe Rodriguez is a Philly-based poet who loves neo-soul, battle rap, and long walks through old poetry journals. Her work is a call for aggressive healing and sankofa.

Swagatika Sarangi (she/her) floats between feeling like a cloud and a tree. A cheerleader for solitude, she writes, performs poems & stories, makes zines, and goes on dates with art. Living in Bangalore, she is a copywriter by profession. When not thinking about afternoon naps, she travels alone to anywhere her bank balance decides. Her poems have been published by *Ayaskala*, *Zineabaad*, *Remington Review*, *All Ears Magazine*, and are upcoming elsewhere. As a spoken word artist, her work has been featured by *Tales & Tacos*. Say hi @swagatika.sarangi on Instagram!

Melody Serra's passion is teaching and empowering others by sharing what she has learned. She helped launch an arts and crafts program at a children's hospital and also taught at San Quentin State Prison. Melody hopes to inspire youth to explore and expand their creativity through web development, writing, and art.

Angie Shenouda is a 21 year old poet from Las Vegas, Nevada. She feels most alive when surrounded by nature, dancing at concerts, and rewatching the Disney movie *Soul* for the millionth time. You can find her at @priority.happiness and her feminist artwork at @darlinangelcreations on Instagram.

Anna Shirshova (she/her) is a poet who studies and lives in London. Her work has been featured or is forthcoming in *Pile Press*, *Phantom Kangaroo*, *The Lovers Literary Journal*, *Blue Daisies Journal*, *The Graveyard Zine*, *Wingless Dreamer*, *W.E.I.R.D* and others. Anna is also a co-founder and editor for an online magazine, *The Literary Canteen*. Her poetry is tender and elegant, with a sense of timelessness and stillness. When not writing Anna is busy scrapbooking, obsessing over scented candles or visiting as many coffeeshops as she can. To discover more, follow Anna on Twitter: @a_lowenzahn.

Paulina Sucre is an illustrator living in New York City with her void cat, Inky. She can be found @dessertviolets on Instagram.

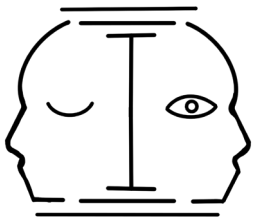
Sarai Marie Sumi is a college English major trying to share her art.

Clementine Williams is a Black, queer undergraduate student hailing from North Carolina. They are working toward a degree in social work with a minor in criminology. Clementine is a new prose and poetry writer whose work centers around Black lesbianism and intersectionality. You can find them @fairyfemmes on Twitter.

Editors

L.M. Camiolo is a writer and editor originally from New York and currently based in Philadelphia. She is a former poetry editor for *Toho Journal* and her work has appeared in *antonym*, *FEED*, *Doghouse*, and elsewhere. She is editor of *Dark Entries*, a journal for dark speculative poetry, and she co-hosts a podcast, *Let's Talk About Snacks*. You can find her at lmcamiolo.wordpress.com.

Hailing from rural Western New York, **Coral O'Leary** is a lake-effect snow ex-pat, current New Yorker, queer poet, cultural worker, and asexual aromantic-spectrum lesbian. Her Pushcart Prize-nominated work has appeared in *Minnow Literary Magazine*, *Baby Teeth Journal*, *SORTES*, and other publications. Coral can be found on Instagram @ohcoralpoetry or www.coraloleary.com.



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